to a recrudescence of the Western offensive fever. Up to December the French Army and the French people—and they were identical, for almost every French home was represented in the Army—were completely disillusioned about the prospect of a break-through on their front. Every French soldier who defended the shell-holes of Verdun or the ruins of one of its shattered forts, and every soldier who had attacked the defended puddles of the Somme, knew that unparalleled gallantry in attack was countered by equal valour in defence, and that neither German nor Frenchman could penetrate even shattered entrenchments defended by the other in time to prevent another line, equally difficult to capture, being thrown up behind. If Joffre had remained at the head of the Army, I doubt whether a French Government or the French people would have agreed to a second Somme campaign. Joffre, who was not without understanding of the temper of his countrymen, realised this to the full, and he imparted the information to Sir Douglas Haig, with a view to inducing him to undertake the heavier and bloodier burden of the 1917 offensive. Haig, who had become a Somme bigot, readily assented. He had a magnificent army of trained volunteers, the flower of Britain's youth. They were backed up by a fine assortment of new guns of the

latest pattern*
Hence the Chantilly agreement.
Then came one of those sudden changes to which the French are more amenable than their phlegmatic neighbours across the Channel. Joffre *Jfis1lk s* wentj anj Nivelle came. Nivelle had a* *Verdun* ^een ^or ^ve months a successful defender of the Verdun heights. That in itself gave him an assured position in the heart of every